



KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CENTER FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

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Certification of State Register Listing

The Register of Historic Kansas Places includes all Kansas properties nominated to the National Register as well as lower threshold properties which are listed on the state register only.

Property Name: **JENSEN-DAHL HOUSE**

Address: **EAST MAIN STREET, DENMARK, KANSAS 67455**

Legal: **S14, T11, R9: PT S2 SE4 BEG AT SW COR LOT 21 DENMARK
TH W760.5' TH N264' TH E770' (S) TH S110' (S) TH W 10'
(S) TH S158' TO POB, CONTAINING .509 ACRES**

County: **LINCOLN COUNTY**

Owner: **MS. SIDNEY WADE**

Address: **3620 SE 27TH STREET, GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA 32641**

National Register eligible X

State Register eligible

This property was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on **NOVEMBER 5, 1994**.

I hereby certify that this property is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

The P.L. Jensen (?) House
Denmark, Kansas

June 7, 1994

The original house, built about 1869(?), is a 1-1/2 story, "T"-shaped, native limestone structure resting on a limestone foundation. Overall dimensions are 40' x 30'. It had three rooms on the first floor, three rooms on the second level and a partial basement. Several later additions on the rear of the house were frame construction.

The original stone house has 18" thick exterior, wall-bearing, limestone block walls which were plastered on the inside. The stone is smooth-faced, 7" high x 30" long limestone blocks, laid in a coursed ashlar bond. The flat lintels over the exterior doors and windows are smooth-faced limestone, 7" high, with 9" bearing on each side. The lintel face protrudes 2" beyond the exterior wall face. Window and door sills are limestone "lug" sills with smooth, dressed surfaces. Access to the basement is via double lift-up doors outside on the east side of the house which cover the steps leading down.

A large wooden porch, with five round, wooden Tuscan-style columns, extends across the entire front (south) elevation of the residence. The ridge of the gable roof (12/12 slope) runs east-west, with a secondary gable roof running north-south over the east part of the house. The roof has a 12" overhang on all sides. It is asphalt shingles in poor condition. There are two dormer windows on the roofs, one facing south and one facing east. A brick chimney protrudes through the roof near the intersection of the two roof ridges. Another chimney on the west elevation on the outside of the house wall, is of two different kinds of brick, and is obviously a later addition because the masonry is not bonded to the limestone wall. An iron strap has been-used to hold it against the exterior wall.

The roof has a 12" overhang on all sides. It is presently asphalt shingles in poor condition.

The house has two doors on the front (south) elevation opening from the "front" porch. The east door was obviously the "front" door. It is a very fancy oak (?) door with a 4 ft. high, oval glass light with beveled edges. The other door from the porch is a 5-panel wood door with one 28" x 28" light. Both doors were set deeply back into the stone wall flush with the interior face of the wall.

The exterior windows are set back two inches from the exterior face of the exterior walls. They are 2/2, wooden double-hung, with a deep interior reveal with wood trim and sill.

The first floor of the original house had three rooms; two rooms on the east, each about 16' x 12', and a single room on the west about 18' x 18'. There are 18" thick bearing walls (plastered) separating all three rooms, obviously of stone. The brick chimney is located in the wall between the two east rooms, with flue openings to both rooms. It appears that the southeast room, with the fancy door to the porch, was the "parlor", and the northeast room was a bedroom. Each room had a heating stove. The large west room was probably the kitchen and dining room. The west brick chimney was for a stove in the northwest corner of the "kitchen". Later north additions (of frame construction) required that a large opening be made in the north wall of the "kitchen" to provide access to the new addition. The "kitchen" then became another parlor and the new additions provided a dining room, a kitchen, a "spring room" with a cistern, a bathroom, a work room and storage space.

A narrow, steep stair in the northeast corner of the "kitchen/dining" room leads up to three small bedrooms which are directly over the three rooms below. Each bedroom has a low, sloping ceiling. Each has a full-height window in the gable wall; the west and southeast bedrooms also have a dormer window. The interior walls on the second floor are of frame construction.

The windows on the original first floor consist of one on each side of the "front" door from the porch to the "parlor"; one next to the porch door to the "kitchen/dining" room; one on the west elevation and two on the east elevation. Windows were probably provided on the north elevation to the bedroom and kitchen/dining room but have been closed by the later additions. On the second floor there is one window at each gable wall (east, west and north) plus dormer windows on the east and south elevations.

The 1-1/2 story design is reminiscent of Danish country houses of the 19th century.

Robert W. Jackson, Registered Architect #891; Professional Engineer #1732

ATTACHMENT #2

The Wade Home (or Jensen/Dahl/Wade Home) stands in a peaceful setting atop a knoll in Denmark, Kansas. This home, built in the early 1880's by P.L. Jensen, is one of the oldest homes in the Denmark area.

The home is historically important for its association with the P.L. Jensen family. P.L. Jensen was one of Denmark's early settlers and opened Denmark's first general store on the property where the Wade home now stands. P.L. Jensen was also Denmark's second postmaster, appointed in 1879, and it is said that the Wade Home once housed the post office. P.L. Jensen was also the first secretary of the historic Denmark Lutheran church, clearly one of the fathers and builders of the community. This home is also historically important in that it represents the typical native limestone home with the wooden frame additions built on as families expanded and experienced good farming years.

This home also gained a special emotional connection with many of the Denmark community. The Denmark citizens continue to appreciate the diligent efforts of both Helen Wade and Arnold Duus to save the home from near ruin and restore it to a historical landmark to which hundreds of visitors come every year.

P.L. Jensen was born September 14, 1840, in Denmark, Europe. At the age of 23 he decided to leave his native country and set sail for North America. He arrived here in 1863, just in the midst of the Civil War. Whether or not he served as a soldier in the Civil War is not known.

Mr. Jensen found work in Wisconsin soon after his arrival in the United States. As the country began to expand, Mr. Jensen moved west looking for new opportunities. He found a job working as a foreman with a crew laying telegraph lines from Kansas to Texas. Apparently, Mr. Jensen worked long and hard hours during the 1860's, for in 1870 he came up to find a homestead in the Denmark, Kansas, area, and he arrived with \$16,000 in his pocket.

He filed homestead papers on the Denmark property in . This property is located at the Southeast Quarter (SE/4) of Section Fourteen (14), Township Eleven (11), South, Range Nine (9) West of the 6th P.M., Lincoln County, Kansas. Just to the east of Trail Creek, it was choice property at the time for it offered easy access to not only timber for fires, but also water for both family and livestock.

At that time, Denmark was not yet a town, there was no general store, and most settlers travelled to Ellsworth by wagon or foot for supplies. Although the Denmark area was not yet heavily settled, homesteaders were moving into the valley, and P.L. Jensen recognized the need for a general store in the community. Therefore, he built a log cabin which was to serve not only as his home but also as a general store. He also purchased a team of oxen and a lumberwagon with which to haul supplies, and he travelled to Ellsworth to buy goods and stock his store.

In 1872, the settlement of Denmark acquired a post office, and Anders Rasmussen, P.L.'s neighbor to the south, became the first postmaster. By the summer of 1877, Mr. Jensen's store must have been well established, for he became postmaster on June 5, 1877. Mr. Jensen probably appreciated this opportunity since settlers, especially the menfolk, spent much time in the post office. And of course, more settlers coming and going from the building meant more custom for the store owner.

Quite often these early homesteaders would travel to the post office to see if they might have received letters from the kinfolk back East or perhaps from the Old Country. If there were no family letters to read, there were always newspapers and magazines available at the post office to browse through. And, of course, the warm wintertime fire in the middle of the room provided a perfect setting for visiting and telling stories.

P.L. Jensen completed the necessary homesteading requirements in May 1879 and became the registered owner of the property. Everything went well until one day when he came home to find his log cabin destroyed by fire. It is believed that this fire occurred in the winter of 1879, for we find that a new postmaster, Charles Colding, was appointed on December 29, 1879.

P.L. Jensen then set about building a new limestone home for his family. While we have no evidence pointing to the actual date of construction of this home, a June 24, 1886 article in The Beacon suggests that a dwelling was probably present on the site by 1886. The article reports "Well drilled at old post office; 80 feet of water in a 100 ft. hole." The north end of the new limestone house stands just to the east of the original log cabin. The home had six rooms, three upstairs, three downstairs, and a large basement beneath the house.

P.L. Jensen married Marie Sheldon, who had emigrated from Denmark, Europe in 1871, according to the 1890 census. To this union were born four children; Anna Elizabeth, Walter, Chris, and a daughter who died in infancy. They made a living farming the 160 acres on their homestead. Both the 1880 and the 1900 Lincoln County Census shows them living in Grant Township. On January 14th, 1901, P.L. Jensen died, and his wife Marie died on March 23rd, 1918.

Many descendants of P.L. Jensen have lived and grown up in the home. On October 1, 1903, P.L. Jensen's daughter Anna married F.H. Dahl, and they moved into the home.

Mr. Dahl had learned the creamery trade in Denmark, Europe, and was eager to begin a creamery business in Denmark, Kansas. The Danish are well known for their cooperative enterprises, and in 1896 Denmark citizens decided to sell stock to open a creamery.

The creamery was built just across the street from F.H. Dahl's home. It was a limestone building with a basement to keep the cream cool. Farmers would bring their whole milk to the creamery each morning and Mr. Dahl

and his assistants would put the milk through the cream separator. This was in the days before the small home cream separators had been invented and the cream separator was a large machine run by a steam engine. Farmers would sell the cream to Mr. Dahl and take the skim milk back home to their farm animals. A man would come in two or three times a week and haul the cream up to Beloit (see attachment #3). Mr. Dahl also made butter and cheese at the creamery to sell.

An October 1917 Lincoln Sentinel advertisement reports that the steam engine in the creamery is to be sold. It was about that time that home cream separators were coming into existence and people were wanting to market the cream themselves. The railroad was coming through Denmark that year also, so farmers had an easy outlet for their cream.

The creamery closed in about 1918, but F.H. Dahl continued to milk cows and deliver bottled milk around Denmark. When the railroad came through Denmark, a building boom occurred in the town. The Robinson Company from Salina built an elevator where the Farmway elevator flat storage now stands, and F.H. Dahl became its manager. He also ran an IH dealership in conjunction with the elevator.

Improvements were added not only to the yard, but also to the home during the years the Jensens and F.H. Dahls lived on the homestead. Sometime in the early years a large barn was built about 200 feet west of the house. To the south of the barn were grain bins. The property where the barn and grain bins once stood were not sold to Helen when she purchased the property. To the east of the barn was a chickenhouse; this was located in the same vicinity as the brick craft shop now is. Just to the northwest of the home, a windmill was erected in 1916 and still stands. To the east of the windmill is the water supply shed. The Lincoln County Appraiser's records show that a 10x14 shed was added in 1910, and according to the appraiser, this would be the washhouse which stands at the northwest corner of the home today.

The home also underwent some major changes in the early 1900's. F.H. Dahl's brother Carl, Helen Dahl Wade's father, built the dining room onto the northwest corner of the original structure. When the roof over this room was redone in the 1970's, the roofers could not help admiring all the work that must have gone into this room. The slope on the roof comes from 2x12's at one end, trimmed down to 2x4's at the other end. Also, soon after this, a small room was built to the north of the dining room, a kitchen was added to the north end, and a porch and pantry to the east.

Toward the mid-1900's, after World War II, F.H.'s son, Finley, and his wife came to the Denmark homestead to live and farm the property. The children attended the Denmark School just across the road from the home. He made no other changes to the original structure of the home, other than having Arnold Duus build a closet into the west room upstairs sometime in the 1950's. Finley moved to Lincoln in the mid-1960's.

A neighbor, Harry Nelson, then bought the place and rented the home to a schoolteacher, Ted Hunt, who lived there for a couple of years. After the Hunt family moved out, the home began to deteriorate rapidly and Mr. Nelson removed most of the cabinets from the kitchen area which was located to the rear of the home.

The house sat empty and appeared to be falling into the same state as many of the skeletons of homesteads we see dotted about the country. It was at about this time that Helen Dahl Wade, a resident of New York, came back to Kansas on one of her frequent visits to her mother in Manhattan, Kansas and happened to drive up to see the Dahl house. Helen was a neice of F.H. Dahl and had fond memories of visiting her Aunt Annie and Uncle F.H. in the summers and playing in the large yard in Denmark.

When Helen saw the condition of the property, she began the process of trying to purchase the small section of the homestead on which the house was located. After working out the details with Mr. Nelson, she began coming back every summer for one month to work on improving the home and yard. As she worked, she kept a diary of progress made on the renovation (see attachment #4).

When Helen first came back, the porch was falling off the house; parts of the porch railing were missing; if there were wallpaper on the walls it was old and musty; the dining room ceiling and the north kitchen ceiling had both fallen in; the wooden floors in both of those rooms were ruined and covered with plaster from the ceiling and roofing materials. The wall on the east porch was falling down and there was only a dirt floor on the porch. Helen came back, though, every summer starting in 1975, stayed for about a month, and worked diligently to bring the house back to life. She was determined to restore the home and yard to reflect her early memories of the place.

A neighbor in Denmark, Arnold Duus, worked throughout summers and winters to rebuild the house and make it the home it once was. Between Helen's guidance and Mr. Duus' creativity and ingenuity, the house slowly became beautiful again. Mr. Duus reattached the porch to the south side of the home and replaced missing railing. Both Helen and Arnold cleaned up the plaster and wood in the dining room and kitchen, and arranged to have the roof fixed. The downstairs bedroom and parlor were papered, and the dining room was finished. Wallpapering the parlor and bedroom proved to be quite a challenge as there was some type of sandy paint on the wall and the wallpaper all fell down the first time it was hung. To finish the dining room, the floorboards all needed to be replaced and the ceiling needed to be sheetrocked. The ceilings in both the parlor and living room were plaster, and also needed to be sheetrocked.

Once that was done Arnold began work on the kitchen which was to be just north of the dining room. He also began working on the bathroom. Here the walls were bad enough that Arnold panelled them; this is probably the only modern-looking material used in the restoration. They also began repairing the east porch. Arnold built a new wall, and Helen decided to pick up stones around the yard and lay them in the floor of the porch. She also laid a design in the floor with broken glass she found about the yard. The Arnold started on the north room, that had been the old kitchen. He worked on repairing the roof, and laid all new floorboards. As Arnold did the carpentry work, Helen was always busy removing paint, caulking, staining, and varnishing.

With the house coming along and taking on its original beauty again, Helen and Arnold turned their attention to the washhouse at the northeast corner of the home. Arnold laid a redwood floor in the breezeway, and Helen worked on cleaning out the washhouse and cleaning up the walls. In 1981 the chicken house burned down. This was a disappointment to Helen as she had had dreams of fixing the building up into a coffeeshop. Therefore, Helen decided she would build a new building there. This building was begun in 1983 and finished in 1986.

All this time Helen had been bringing furniture out of the basement and attic and refinishing it. Arnold removed the bad roof from the water storage shed and used some of the lumber from the water storage compartment to make an end table for the living room. He also brought the backs of two old couches out of the attic and rebuilt and reupholstered them.

As the renovation progressed, people often suggested that Helen provide a more modern look to the place. She was adamant, however, in her opinion that this was an old house and it needed to retain its old-fashioned appearance in its structure and furnishings. We appreciate today the authenticity of the home and Helen's ambition to retain its original beauty.

The two spent considerable time in the garden also. Helen would find wildflowers she enjoyed and transplant them into her yard. Arnold worked at planting a number of black walnut trees about the place, and kept them watered in Helen's absence.

As the home emerged from its dishevelled state, Helen entertained many many guests and visitors, never hesitating to give them a tour and a history of the house and its restoration. This tradition continues, with ladies from the Denmark community offering their time and services as tour guides through the home.

Helen made her last annual summer visit to Kansas in 1989. In 1990, she was diagnosed with a brain tumor and became very ill. In October of 1991 she made one final and very brief trip to Kansas to see her beloved home once again, and on July 30, 1992, Helen died.

The home was given to her daughter, Sidney Wade. Sidney resides in Florida but hopes to return to Denmark once every summer just as her mother did. Three ladies from the Denmark community now help keep up the home and yard.

When Helen was alive, she loved showing her home so rich with history and traditions. Tourists from many states stopped in to see her and her home. Helen's daughter Sidney would like to continue this tradition of sharing. The home, decorated with turn-of-the-century furnishings and handiwork is open from June to October by appointment. In the early summer the wildflowers scattered about the lawn make the property especially lovely.

This summer a craft and gift shop will open on the property. Danish folkcrafts, gifts, and foods will be available through the shop or by mail.